

HONORING LINDA DARNELL
THORPE ON THE OCCASION OF
HER RETIREMENT

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join the many family, friends, and colleagues in paying tribute to my dear friend, Linda Darnell Thorpe, as she celebrates her retirement after 36 years of dedicated service as an educator with the New Haven Public School System. She has been a teacher that is not only loved by her students, but respected by her colleagues—a reflection of all that we hope and expect our educators to be.

A native of New Haven, Linda was educated locally earning a B.S. in education from Southern Connecticut State University as well as an M.S. from the University of Connecticut. She began her career at the Martin Luther King, Jr. School where she taught second grade. She spent 24 years at MLK, teaching two generations of students—literally having the opportunity to teach some of the children of the young people she first taught at the beginning of her career. She has spent the last 12 years at the Edgewood Magnet School where she has taken on the challenge of educating a more diverse group of fifth and sixth grade students.

I have often spoke of our nation's need for talented, creative educators ready to help our children learn and grow. Throughout her career, Linda has been just that kind of teacher. She is well-known among her colleagues as always being the first to arrive in the morning and one of the last to leave in the evening. Linda would arrive 6 o'clock in the morning and, on more than one occasion, would have to return home when it was announced that school would be closed on a snow day.

Linda's deep commitment to education is best reflected in the success of her students. Her enthusiasm and energy combined with her belief that children learn best when they are active in the learning process created an environment where children not only wanted to learn, they had fun doing so. The myriad of accolades, awards, and commendations that she has received throughout the years are testimony to the positive impact she has had on her students. Her students were excited to be in her classroom and inspired to succeed. That was her gift to them. For an educator, there is no greater legacy one could leave.

In a career that has spanned four decades, Linda has touched the lives of thousands of young people. She has helped to shape their education and their character—preparing them with the tools and skills they need and building a foundation on which they will enjoy future success. She has also served as an inspiration to her colleagues. Today, as she celebrates her retirement and reflects on her career, I am proud to join her longtime companion, Stanley Welch, her grandson Winston, and all of those gathered today in extending my sincere thanks and appreciation for her outstanding and invaluable contributions. Linda Darnell Thorpe is an extraordinary woman, teacher, and friend and we are all better for having the opportunity to know her.

IN HONOR OF THE MOST
VENERABLE THICH HO GIAC

HON. AL GREEN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, this Father's Day, I wish to celebrate the life and ministry of the Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac, who currently serves at the Phap Luan Buddhist Culture Center in Houston, Texas. He was born on January 14, 1928 and is now 80 years old. He does not have any biological children of his own, but he is still a father figure and mentor to many in the Buddhist faith.

The Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac has committed his life to religion and service. He was admitted to monastery life when he was five years old. He was ordained as a bhikkhu in 1948. He came to the United States in 1982 and became a United States citizen in 1988. He has two leadership titles: Supreme patriarch of Buddhist Sangha and President of the Overseas Office of the Unified Buddhist Church of Vietnam.

Madam Speaker, on this Father's Day, I ask my colleagues and the people of Houston to honor the Most Venerable Thich Ho Giac for his seventy-five years of service and leadership in the Buddhist faith.

**PASSENGER RAIL INVESTMENT
AND IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2008**

SPEECH OF

HON. ANDRÉ CARSON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2008

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 6003) to reauthorize Amtrak, and for other purposes:

Mr. CARSON of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 6003, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. As this country's sole provider of regularly scheduled intercity passenger rail service, Amtrak's importance and necessity to all Americans is clear. In the face of continually rising gas prices, overloaded highways and congested airports, many Americans are being forced to make difficult financial decisions regarding their modes of travel. Amtrak has become an ever more viable transportation option at such a time, and continues to be a practical option for many of those people searching for an efficient and economical travel alternative.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, Amtrak carried almost 25.8 million passengers and posted approximately \$1.5 billion in ticket revenue in 2007. This is a gain of 10 percent over FY06 ticket revenues, and is the third consecutive year that ticket revenues have increased. It is through a combination of increased profits and a reauthorization bill that proposes \$14.4 billion dollars over the next five years that Amtrak will have an incredible opportunity to thrive and flourish.

H.R. 6003 does much to aid in the continued growth and vitality of Amtrak. The bill authorizes \$4.2 billion to Amtrak for capital grants and \$3 billion for operating grants. It is

no secret that inconsistent Federal support has hampered Amtrak's ability to replace equipment necessary for it to provide service. These capital grants will help Amtrak make additional capital improvements and maintenance over its entire network. In addition, the operating grants authorized under the bill will help Amtrak pay salaries, health costs, overtime pay, fuel costs, facilities, and train maintenance and operations. These operating grants will also ensure that Amtrak can meet its obligations under its recently negotiated labor contract.

The Amtrak reauthorization bill also does much for intercity and high speed passenger rail in this country. The bill creates a new State Capital Grant program for intercity passenger rail and capital projects. It also recommends that the United States establish a high-speed rail network for the entire country. The bill authorizes \$1.75 billion for grants to States and Amtrak to finance the construction and equipment for 11 authorized high-speed rail corridors.

However, Amtrak still has many hurdles to overcome, the biggest of which is its \$3.17 billion worth of debt. Although Amtrak has taken great steps in reducing its debt by almost \$600 million since 2002, it still has a long way to go. As a result, this bill explicitly helps Amtrak manage its debt by authorizing \$345 million each year for debt service through FY2013.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly pleased and grateful to the committee, under the leadership of Chairman OBERSTAR and Chairwoman BROWN, for including a provision that calls for a report on Amtrak's utilization of the Beech Grove repair facility in my congressional district. The report will also include an examination to determine the extent that Amtrak is maximizing the opportunities for each facility, including any attempts to provide maintenance and repair to other rail carriers. As the largest Amtrak maintenance facility in the country, it is my belief that the Beech Grove facility is underutilized and that Amtrak can bring more maintenance work to this facility.

Mr. Chairman, this piece of legislation is long overdue and much needed. It is time for us to give Amtrak all the funding and opportunities it needs to become a more efficient and effective travel alternative for Americans. I am pleased that we are bringing this bill to the floor and I urge all my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

**COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND
LEGACY OF DARRENT
DEMARCUS WILLIAMS OF FORT
WORTH, TEXAS**

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 12, 2008

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Darrent "Dee" Williams and his legacy, the Darrent Williams Foundation.

Darrent Williams, a constituent of TX-D26, was a Fort Worth native and O.D. Wyatt graduate who died tragically January 1, 2007. Though his most important roles were as son, father and role model to many, he was also a star NFL player for the Denver Broncos. With